DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 171 PS 018 461

TITLE	Education in a Changing South: New Policies, Patterns and Programs. Report on the Continuing Conference (6th, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2-4, 1988). Legislating Comprehensive Policy for Children and Youth for the 90s.
INSTITUTION	Southern Education Foundation, Atlanta, Ga.
PUB DATE	Nov 88
NOTE	32p.; For report on 1986 conference, see ED 286 967.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Demonstration Programs; Disadvantaged; Early Childhood Education; Educational Change; Educational Needs; Educational Quality; Education Work Relationship; *Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Federal Legislation; *Government Role; *Policy Formation; Prevention; Research and Development; School Health Services; Special Education; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Proposed Legislation; *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

In November 1988, the sixth annual Continuing Conference of the Southern Education Foundation brought together about 140 veteran educators, civil rights advocates, and experts on federal education policymaking in an effort to candidly reexamine the role of the Federal Government in education. Discussion focused on: (1) how to return the Federal Government to its proper role; (2) the need for fundamental changes in education; (3) the obsolescence of traditional schooling; (4) challenges for urban schools; (5) how to move the Federal Government from retrenchment to activism; (6) responses from a panel of former federal education officials; (7) an approach to successful schools that emphasizes the promotion of social development of at-risk children; (8) the struggle for children's health; (9) preventive implementation as the basis of national policy on children and youth; and (10) committee recommendations redefining federal education priorities. Attendees produced a Continuing Conference Omnibus Education Act with six titles: equity and excellence programs for disadvantaged children; investment in recruitment and training of educators; early childhood education; special education and rehabilitation; school-to-work transition; and research and demonstration. Attendees, and their addresses and affiliations, are listed. (RH)

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Education in a Changing South: New Policies, Patterns and Programs

REPORT ON THE CONTINUING CONFERENCE

of the Southern Education Foundation, Inc.

Legislating Comprehensive Policy for Children and Youth for the 90s

November 2-4, 1988
Atlanta, Georgia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Southern Education Foundation wishes to express its thanks to a number of people who have provided the guidance, assistance and energy which made this sixth annual Conference possible. We are grateful to the Conference planning committee, composed of Cynthia Brown, Ruby Martin and Stuart Rosenfeld, which again this year has piloted the Conference from conception to closing session.

We are equally indebted to the ten U.S. Congressional aides who advised us on the nature of the Conference exercise and served as counsel to assist participants charged with redesigning the federal education program. These individuals are Wendell Belew, William Blakey, Patricia Fleming, Terry Hartle, Jack Jennings, Susan McGuire, Susanne Martinez, Edward Sylvester and Vincent Trudy. We wish especially to acknowledge the advice and support of Karabelle Pizzigati and Ann Rosewater of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families.

A special thanks is also due to Mary Armstrong of the SEF staff, who coordinated the increasingly complex Conference.

Finally, we wish to thank our speakers, presiders, and more than 100 participants. Their consideration of the critical issues rendered exactly the kind of continuing and necessary dialogue that we envisioned at the Conference's start some six years ago.

Anne Lewis served as Conference rapporteur.

OVERVIEW

Elridge W. McMillan
President

Robert A. Kronley
Senior Consultant

If policymakers could start over and redesign federal programs for children and youth to obtain greater equity, what would the programs look like? The Continuing Conference of the Southern Education Foundation, through its Program in Education and Public Policy, decided to find out. Convening about 140 veteran educators and civil rights advocates from the South and experts on federal education policymaking, the sixth annual Continuing Conference turned its interest in achieving equity in education to the national level.

The federal government became an important partner in the education of children and young people with the passage of major elementary and secondary programs more than 20 years ago. While its overall contribution represents less than 6 percent of the expenditures on precollegiate education, the concentration of funding on disadvantaged children and youth provides an investment which poor urban and rural districts cannot make. Further, federal funding, even though small, creates priorities in school districts around the country through the use of incentives. However, the lessons learned from two decades of major federal involvement and the emergence of different needs justify a candid re-examination of the federal role.

This is just what the Continuing Conference did in November 1988. A year earlier, at the fifth annual meeting, the participants had used the state budget-making process to develop new priorities for equity in education in the South, creating an ideal agenda for the mythical state of Kudzu. At the sixth conference, the victorious N-N Party (Neither-Nor) had wiped all federal legislation off the books, and Kudzu's governor, now vice president, asked the Continuing Conference to design a new federal omnibus education bill. Witnesses testified about priorities, and small groups, led by Congressional staff members, developed their versions of ideal legislation.

The process and final products follow in this report. That the major programs which seek to provide equity and quality for those with the greatest needs essentially remain intact is a credit to their purpose and achievements. That some changes are in order should be seriously considered by policymakers. And that this Conference decided some programs have outlived their usefulness should be a first step in shifting priorities to provide for new needs.

The Continuing Conferences, since their beginning in 1983, have looked at priorities and policymaking in terms of education in a changing South. The 1988 Conference added richly to that process.

RETURNING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ITS 'PROPER' ROLE

"We have let a new philosophy of government embrace this country over the last eight years — one that says the government has no business providing housing, education and jobs for the people who need them."
PARREN J. MITCHELL

Mitchell

With the passion that he finds missing in today's politics and policymaking, the Hon. Parren J. Mitchell, former congressman from Baltimore, Md., led off the Continuing Conference's proceedings with a plea to be "messianic" about returning the federal government to its proper role of "promoting the general welfare." Mitchell said he did not know of a single school district in the country, save for a very few, which has the money to pay for a quality education.

"I'm glad the whales are out," he said of the just-completed rescue effort in the Bering Sea, "but where have you seen that much excitement about one school that is failing? When have you seen a community rally around a school and say, 'We're going to rebuild that school again'?"

After leaving Congress, Mitchell founded the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense Fund, Inc., in order to protect the gains made in legislation regarding minority participation in federal programs supporting business. When the Reagan Administration came in, the congressman realized that legislation he had fought for was in jeopardy. "We knew we had lost the Justice Department," Mitchell said. The lack of vigorous enforcement of such laws and of other civil rights statutes, plus the cutback in programs for the disadvantaged, including education, have created even greater chasms between the high road and the low road for blacks and other minorities, Mitchell said.

"On the high road, we see blacks moving up in the corporate world, being elected to office, becoming successful entrepreneurs," he pointed out. "But there is a nasty, ugly low road." On that low road, he said:

- There is a resurgence of racism. "Deliberate propaganda tries to convince us that racism is dead in this country. It is a lie that we have become colorblind. The racism is not violent, but gracious and smooth. It says, 'I am an equal employment employer, but I can't find a qualified minority to hire.' "
- There is a widening gap between white and black family median income. The black rate of unemployment is twice as high as that of whites, Mitchell said, the result of and exacerbated by "retreats on affirmative action and civil rights."
- The agencies of the federal government created to protect those on the low road don't do it anymore. "Where is the fighting spirit of years ago?" Mitchell asked. "We went to court even if we could lose because we knew our cause was just."

These reversals have created what Mitchell describes as the "mobile status quo," in which the high road remains good for some, but the lower class slips even further. "There is a lot of talk about the danger of a new permanent underclass," he noted, "but it is not a danger to be anticipated. It already is here."

Living in Baltimore's inner-city by choice, Mitchell often is discouraged by what he sees happening to poor children in the schools. On the high road, students, no matter what racial/ethnic background, make excellent records and are taught by dedicated staff "with a contagion of excitement." On the low road, the faculty and the students operate on a self-fulfilling prophecy — "you are what you are, and my expectation of what you are is what you are. Therefore, you won't make it." Or, the faculty practice "misplaced sympathy" with the attitude that, "I know you can't make it, but I'm going to pass you, anyway."

"Don't cheat black children, don't send them out unprepared into the world where they must compete," Mitchell implored his audience. "Demand the best of them. Remember what Martin Luther King, Jr., said — that if you can't be at the top, be at the top of your capability."

Mitchell also said educators must learn how to teach values in the schools. "We have racism in the schools," he said, "but if we taught values, that would be reduced, young people would understand the intrinsic value of human beings." The lack of values has led to a nation "obsessed by money" and to scandals on Wall Street, in the medical profession and in business contracts.

Faced with reversals in both the federal and the larger society's commitment to education, a far-from-finished agenda on civil rights, and more children on the low road, Mitchell implored the Conference participants to show passionate leadership, to renew their commitment to the preciousness of life and to bring out the best in people. "Don't turn out another study,"he said, but, instead, "catch the fervor of what it means to take a life and lift it."

Poverty will increase for children as long as the number of single-parent families headed primarily by women increases, Mitchell said.

A Road Map Through the Problems

The two roads in Parren Mitchell, Jr.'s description of the United States today are mapped in the demographic, economic and social issues facing educators in the South and elsewhere.

Demographics

- The "baby boom" is over, and major shifts are occurring among various ethnic/racial groups. The non-Hispanic/Asian white population will continue to decline. Over the next few decades, births among blacks are expected to stabilize while the Hispanic and some Asian populations will increase dramatically.
- States with the most population — and, consequently, political influence — will soon have majority minority school enrollments, already a fact in California. In that state, as well as Texas, New York and Illinois, much of the growth in minority enrollment in the schools will be due to immigration.
- Public school enrollments will become increasingly minority, especially in the inner-cities, with much greater diversity because of immigrant families.
- Population shifts will continue toward metropolitan areas, with even rural areas becoming more "urbanized" because of metropolitan outward growth. Population growth also will continue to concentrate on the two coasts, although the Southwest also will experience an in-migration of an older population.
- The poorest families and children will be even more concentrated in inner-cities and the rural South and even more isolated. Job growth will continue to shift to suburban rims, where neither housing nor transportation are available or convenient for the inner-city poor.
- Poverty will increase for children as long as the number of single-parent families headed primarily by women increases.
- The teaching and administrative force not only will be depleted by an unusually large number of retirements over the next decade, but the pattern of college enrollments indicates a severe shortage of educators from minority populations at all levels.

Economic Changes

- Business/industry changes require a workforce with different skills. Workers need to know how to use math and statistics better and adapt to greater individual responsibilities and problem solving behavior in the workplace. Traditional school-based instruction offers learning at this level to only a small percentage of the top performers.
- Job-growth projections indicate the greatest growth will be in those fields requiring some post-secondary training. Technology will be used to enhance the work life of those with the proper skills; for those without them, it will be used to "dumb down" jobs that will not provide decent incomes.
- Most large businesses/industries are becoming part of a global economy, with decisions over operations often out of the control of corporate leaders in this country. Workers must be able to adapt to multiple job changes throughout their lifetimes and understand global economic factors.
- However, the dilemma for schooling remains one of the entry-level needs of young people, most of whom are absorbed by small businesses which want specific skill training.
- Domestically, economic growth patterns will be volatile and uneven, pitting states against each other and creating unstable conditions for school funding.

Social Issues

- Families will continue to get smaller, and mothers will continue to enter the workforce in large numbers before their children are school-age because of the need to have an income. One-half of all children under two already have working mothers.

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but the number of quality day care facilities is far short of the need.

- Affordable housing for the middle-class as well as poor families will continue in short supply. The impact on inner-city children already is evident — more than 10,000 children live in shelters for the homeless in New York City alone. On the other side, as the non-poor move further and further out from job locations in order to find affordable housing, the social supports that once were available to children and young people erode. Families and community resources are not as readily available.
- Non-school influences on children and youth, such as drug use, health problems and the impact of adult media, require resources in terms of people and coordination of programs that are not currently available in sufficient quantity or quality.

A FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

"A growing number of our young people are becoming anti-citizens. They don't participate in society through work, through voting, through taking part in their communities.... Soon, as many as one-fourth of young people will be at risk of being anti-citizens.... How can we compete? How can we still be the United States of America?"

FRANK NEWMAN

Newman

Education policymaking is taking place within a dynamic system that includes new partners to deal with festering problems, Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, testified.

There is no chance that youth policy in this country will remain as is, he said. "Only once since World War II has there been a period when the federal government was not in the center of action on youth policy — and that has been the past eight years," he said. "The problems have now become serious enough to bring together people usually not allies of education policymaking." These include the business community, now pursuing fundamental changes in the education system, and the military, now dependent upon increased skills among recruits.

International competition is not the only concern of new partners in youth policymaking, Newman said. American society also faces the possibility of an intensified two-class society divided along racial-ethnic lines, of an antiquated curriculum that lacks intellectual challenge, and of serious health problems, especially AIDS, among vulnerable youth.

That is why the reform agenda of the states, of business and other interested parties now focuses on restructuring of schools, on much more fundamental changes, according to the ECS leader. The changes are based on what works with at-risk youth — a school environment that makes them active, rather than passive, learners; the involvement of parents; mentoring systems that provide continuous guidance to young people; the organization of social services into comprehensive services; and early childhood education.

"We must begin by convincing the public that all kids can learn," Newman said. And then, follow up with radical changes in the schools which make that goal possible.

States are deeply involved with such issues, he pointed out, and any renewed federal activity must support the reforms which increasingly are school-based. That means federal policy must rely less on formulas "that spread dollars around and create bureaucratic rules."

Further, Newman criticized the directions proposed by former Secretary of Education William Bennett and others to return to "classical" standards "that never happened and never will. Kids are not going to stand around on the playground discussing Locke.... What is needed is a schooling system and youth policy that can regenerate themselves. This is a dynamic world."

Policy Proposals

- Presidential leadership that "gets on a soapbox and insists that all young people can learn and they all can serve, messages that become absorbed into our system."
- Research that is useful and made available to policymakers and educators.
- An emphasis on modes of policymaking that leverage change, including demonstration projects, incentives, competitive grants and mandates.
- A strong economic policy that ties education to economic health.
- Policymaking that works in tandem with the states to create a dynamic system, one that creates systems run for children and not bureaucracies.

TRADITIONAL SCHOOLING: OUT OF SYNC WITH THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE

"As the educational implications of restructuring the American economy become clearer, so does the incomplete and sometimes perverse nature of current educational reforms. Those reforms targeted at improving students' academic skills are clearly appropriate — up to a point, ***academic and work-related curricula should be the same.*** *However, I am arguing for a second wave of reform that involves shifts in* ***what*** *we teach,* ***to whom*** *we teach it,* ***how*** *we teach it, and* ***when*** *we teach it."*

SUE BERRYMAN

Berryman

A strong endorsement of fundamental reforms in education and of a strong role for the federal government comes from the research about changes in the American workplace. They are dramatic, rapid and out of sync with traditional schooling, according to Sue Berryman, director of the Institute on Education and the Economy at Teachers College-Columbia University.

Education must respond to the long-term trend toward fewer lower-skill jobs, Berryman said.

"The long-term trend in both the civilian and military sectors is toward fewer lower-skill jobs," she testified. Further, the distinctions within industries between lower and higher-skill work are becoming blurred, and those companies that are not restructuring jobs often are marginal and increasingly vulnerable to economic shakeouts.

Consequently, promotion and wage growth increasingly depend on a person's education and ability to absorb higher levels of training, Berryman said. Because of changes in production, much more is at stake than traditional skills. "While many jobs used to be based on the repetition of a particular set of well-defined tasks," she explained, "jobs now are more likely to demand varied and unpredictable responses to a variety of stimuli and information."

For schooling, this means that:

- Workers need good academic skills, need higher-order cognitive thinking, need to know how to learn and need teamwork abilities, need the ability to self-direct and the ability to resolve conflicts.
- Everyone needs to learn these skills — problem solving and critical thinking need to be a regular part of the school program for all students, not just an elite.
- These skills need to be learned early — "it is implausible to think that high school sophomores educated in a passive learning regime for the first nine years of their schooling can learn to self-regulate their learning in the tenth year."
- Teaching and learning should be contextual, that is "intelligence and expertise are built out of interaction with the environment, not in isolation from it." This means "vitalizing," not "vocationalizing," schooling.

Berryman suggested three approaches to link education more effectively to changes in the economy: follow the example of good teachers who know how to vitalize teaching, use specialized or magnet schools to enhance the curriculum, and make better use of information technologies.

Federal Policy Recommendations

- Show leadership by leading the debate about educational standards and goals and strategies for reaching them.
- Step up research and development on information technologies for schools, how people learn in non-school settings and the implication for schooling, accountability measures more congruent with the skills students should develop, and stronger and more complete statistics on students and the educational system.
- Encourage restructuring of vocational education to move away from tracked systems in comprehensive high schools and move to magnet and theme schools for all students and to more creative use of technology.
- Decrease the fragmentation of education and training policies, particularly between the Departments of Education and Labor.
- Consider a policy proposing training vouchers for workers to provide continuous education and training.

CHALLENGES FOR URBAN SCHOOLS

"We need to write into our urban programs the idea of high expectations for all children. But we have to develop a positive culture before we can expect things to happen."

RICHARD HUNTER

Hunter

The problems of urban education and the increasing number of at-risk children and youth reflect historical attitudes toward children and their economic worth, testified Richard Hunter, newly appointed superintendent of the Baltimore City Schools and former superintendent at Richmond, Va. For black children, the legacy of slavery inflicted a devastating blow, and migration from the South only "replaced discrimination with degradation."

Black families, Hunter said, do not condone delinquent behavior, and a majority keep their children out of serious problems, yet only a small percentage of those worst off — the ghetto youth — are able to overcome their problems.

"There are good urban schools that, as a Ford Foundation study declared, 'keep' — they keep open, they keep their students, the students learn," Hunter said. "We are making progress." This message is especially important in the changing South, he pointed out, because the new South increasingly faces an urban challenge.

However, he also acknowledged that the administrative structures in urban school districts are not designed to help minority students achieve. "They are not well staffed, and they are deeply entrenched by those who have allowed the failures to occur," Hunter said. In order to spread the good work of schools which are succeeding, a district needs to have leaders throughout the structure, he said.

In order to provide a school climate which conveys the belief that all children can learn, "people have to be energized, they have to be shown that all kids can learn," he said, but added that "a large percentage of those in the schools are middle-class and have lost the idea that children can be successful." He listed three items for action: a collaborative spirit within the school community to attract and retain good teachers, greater recognition of the African-American culture in the curriculum, and provision of incomes for teachers that are comparable to those in the metropolitan area.

Accountability on the issue of higher expectations for inner-city children begins at the top, in Hunter's opinion. Yet, teachers must not object to accountability for what they do, and administrators must accept it, as well as accommodate participatory decision-making. "We need a total educational environment which says that all children can learn," Hunter said.

Recommendations for Federal Policy

- More money for at-risk students.
- A commitment to compensate for the neglect of the education system and the problems caused by urban poverty.
- Renewed investment in developing leadership of state education agencies.

MOVING FROM RETRENCHMENT TO ACTIVISM

"The first thing I ask a student now is, 'What do you dream about becoming?' So many don't have dreams anymore."

BARBARA HATTON

Hatton

After several years of retrenchment and ineffective policy proposals, the federal level is becoming more activist in education policy and more concerned with equity issues, according to Barbara Hatton, deputy director of educational and cultural programs for the Ford Foundation. The concern must be that federal leverage is used constructively.

Hatton is concerned particularly with measurements of academic progress that convey the impression of more success than is warranted — especially with minority youth. "We are seeing marginal gains in test scores, but also greater dropout rates and slower rates of progress through school," she testified. "If we want the weakest students to achieve, to meet the standards that we set, there are two good strategies to use — early intervention with policies that produce collaborative services and investment in the quality of the people who teach and lead in schools."

Emphasizing her belief in the importance of schooling to intervene positively in the lives of minority children, Hatton endorsed the attempts to restructure schools to increase the professionalization of teachers. Yet,

restructuring has failed to address the training of administrators. "The restructuring agenda almost says we can run schools without leaders," she said, primarily because there is not a sufficient research base about school leadership. However, Hatton pointed out, "It will take strong leadership to narrow the gap between the top and the bottom performers, between the affluent and the poor. We have to hold school cultures accountable for narrowing that gap."

She added that all of the recent reforms have produced only marginal gains for students, "even for suburban youngsters." Low achieving students need role models, but not the one-shot celebrity visit. "They must be a living kind of involvement in students' lives, they must have an influence on their values and their ideas." A related issue is that of a decreasing number of minority teachers. "Low achieving students are more teacher-dependent, they hold teachers in high esteem, they are more sensitive to the attitudes of teachers," Hatton said. Black teachers are more likely to be sensitive to the difficulties that weaker students have in making the transition from home to school, she explained. Unfortunately, many black teachers in minority schools do not want to be there. More important than the race or sex of a teacher "is their desire to be there, their cultural orientation toward the students they teach," she said. "We must not put teachers in classrooms if they are not willing to engage their students."

Recommendations for Federal Policy

- Pay careful attention to assessments and how they are used. Any federal testing program must be used fairly and sensitively.
- Change federal entitlement programs to recognize success, through incentives, in the growth of students.
- Take greater responsibility for raising the quality of teacher and administrator personnel.
- Develop programs to increase the number of minority teachers.

The restructuring schools movement must address the training of teachers and administrators.

A PANEL OF FORMER FEDERAL EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONDS

"You have recommended that federal monies go around local districts and be distributed directly to schools. In view of the big military build-up in the federal budget over the past few years, would you also say we should by-pass the Joint Chiefs of Staff and fund each tank?"

RON SAILOR, WSB-TV

Finn

What lessons about federal policymaking in education come from hindsight?

If nothing else, be more creative; and above all, don't promise more than can be delivered.

A panel of experts, all Republican appointees responsible for federal education research activities and spanning more than 15 years of service, presented these very qualified views of federal education programs as well as their own agendas to the Continuing Conference.

The most pessimistic was the most recent official of the U.S. Department of Education, Chester Finn, Jr., former assistant secretary for research and school improvement. As a staff member in Congress, Finn worked on legislation establishing the National Institute of Education, then, as assistant secretary, advised on the dismantling of the research agency. He would do even more to eliminate what he considers unnecessary federal programs, such as aid to libraries or to vocational education.

But first, Finn described the problems and dilemmas inherent in federal policymaking. It operates within a finite budget, must deal with interagency issues on programs outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, manage authorization statutes that expire at different times, and negotiate with different committees on Capitol Hill. He pointed out how little funding is available for education — the total amount concentrated on just one-fourth of the students in the country would amount to only $1,000 per pupil.

Finn posed several questions for those redrawing federal policies for education:

- Does what you are doing distinctly address a federal role, or is it treating the federal government as a cash cow?
- How do you know what you are doing will work? — "most federal education programs do not demand evidence of results."
- Who will actually control important decisions about the flow of funds and programmatic implications — the bureaucrats in Washington, the education establishment, teachers, state and local politicians, parents, kids? Presently, Finn said, money mostly goes to state and local education agencies, almost none goes to the school building.
- Are you confident that the instrumentality chosen is capable of accomplishing the goals you have set? The formal educational institution is only good at a finite number of things, Finn said: "It is fairly good at cognitive learning, not always as good at preventing AIDS, or curing broken homes or eliminating poverty."

An equally skeptical view of federal education programs came from Manuel Justiz, the last director of the National Institute of Education and

The panel takes the heat from Conference participants. Left to right: Chester Finn, Manuel Justiz, Thomas Glennan, moderator Ron Sailor.

presently a faculty member at the University of South Carolina. Pointing to significant state activity in education reform of the past eight years, Justiz said the federal role should be more clearly defined and not step on the toes of activist states. In his opinion, it would do better to limit itself to providing leadership on "crosscutting issues," such as increasing the number of minorities on college campuses and particularly in teacher preparation programs.

While Finn lobbied for federal policy to by-pass school districts and fund schools directly, Justiz warned of the bureaucratic snarls. How can the federal government make an individual high school better? he asked. Communities create the climate for better schools, not the federal government, in his opinion.

With more time to look back on his role in federal policymaking, Thomas Glennan, Jr., was more philosophical about the role of the federal level. The first director of the National Institute of Education, now with the Rand Corporation, Glennan said education policymaking in general is in ferment because of changing demographics and challenges, "but the solutions needed are not those that can be implemented in a short time. These are long-term problems."

Glennan

Current federal tools to deal with the problems have their particular problems, in his view. Categorical programs create political divisiveness which eventually results in "fracturing kids." Further, large programs create pressures to spread resources around, preventing efforts to concentrate resources where they are most needed.

The most effective federal role would be:

- As a convenor — to define problems, recognize those who have solutions, promote communication among those with good ideas.
- To provide rhetorical leadership — the President can set the tone, the Secretary of Education can help communities organize to deal with problems.
- To decide what should be kept as federal policy and what should be thrown out.
- To provide research and development.

Under the sharp questioning of moderator Ron Sailor of WSB-TV in Atlanta, the three panelists debated these ideas but wound up where they started — defending a narrower role for the federal level that boosts local initiative but avoids a bureaucratic build-up.

Feds Should Play Important Monitoring Role

"Some states will not be interested in educating the disadvantaged unless the feds are breathing down their necks."

Even though the most important factors that keep at-risk students in school are somewhat remote from federal policymaking, such as parental support, a strong principal and "dynamite teachers," there is a specific role for the federal level, in the view of Vincent Reed of the *Washington Post*. "It needs to monitor the states," he said. "Some states will not be interested in educating the disadvantaged unless the feds are breathing down their necks." Former superintendent of the District of Columbia schools, Reed spoke more about negative attitudes than about broad policymaking. "Too many young people are concerned about things other than education, too many parents view schools as custodial agencies, and too many teachers are concerned only about job security," he said. Parents especially can convince young people that they have a future, which is the only viable argument against dropping out of school. Reed also said policymakers have to start looking at "boards of education that don't lead but interfere" and start understanding that the real problem in schools today is not dropouts or drugs "but violence."

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

"At-risk children are socially underdeveloped, not lacking in cognitive ability."

JAMES COMER

Comer

A demonstration that began 20 years ago in New Haven, Conn., to show there are specific policies which can turn failing, inner-city schools into successful ones has implications for federal policymaking.

Testifying about his schools, now being duplicated in other school districts, Dr. James Comer, director of the Yale University Child Study Center, explained that he built his program on an understanding of child development. At-risk children are socially underdeveloped, not lacking in cognitive ability, he said.

"There is a misalignment between the expectations of the schools and the development of these children," Comer said. Because of the schools' focus on cognitive development, he found that children could not establish an attachment, a bonding, with the adults in the schools.

Consequently, Comer created a model which illustrates many of the features of school-based management — a new element in policymaking from the federal to the local level. Only his model concentrates on the developmental needs of children, providing a sense of community within a school and a sensitivity to the needs of the children.

Schools should focus not only on cognitive learning, but on the social and developmental needs of children, Comer said.

The model does this through various groupings — a management group of teachers, parents, and the principal; a parent group, a support staff group, and a mental health team which makes the programs sensitive to the developmental needs of children.

"The focus within the schools is on problem-solving, not fault finding," Comer said. "There is shared power and decision by consensus." The management and mental health groups help develop a social skills curriculum that systematically teaches the children and their parents to feel they are a part of the "mainstream." Adults and children work together on substantive ideas — politics and government, health, spiritual and leisure development, and an appreciation for aesthetics.

The two schools originally developing the model were 98 percent black, with the lowest achievement and attendance in the school district. That was in 1968. In 1984, they had the third and fourth highest achievement in the school district, the best attendance, and no serious behavior problems during the past decade.

The implications of this approach for policymaking include:

- Changing the education and training of teachers and administrators to include knowledge of child development
- Changing the organization and management of schools to do away with hierarchical structures and embrace shared power with specific goals
- Attention to the living conditions of children, as well as their education (adequate housing creates a sense of community)
- An emphasis upon early interventions
- Using recreational programs to supplement the social development of children
- A commitment to quality programs, which means finding and training the people who can make the programs work.

Recommendations for Federal Policy

- Create a National Academy of Education to expose educators to good ideas
- Provide money for the retraining of teachers and administrators

AN UPHILL BATTLE FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

"We know what works and what is cost-effective in the health care of children."

SARA ROSENBAUM

Rosenbaum

The federal government has a direct, necessary role in eliminating the conditions which impair children's ability to learn — health problems.

Sara Rosenbaum, reporting on a just-released study by the Children's Defense Fund, described a series of setbacks in health indicators which bear on what schools can do for at-risk children. Among the findings:

- The black/white infant mortality ratio is 2 to 1, the greatest gap since 1940.
- Twenty percent of all school-aged children are disabled in some way, but 30 percent of poor children are.
- The proportion of children not covered by health insurance has increased by 20 percent among poor children.
- The lack of immunizations increased greatly between 1980 and 1985.

"We know what works and what is cost-effective in the health care of children," Rosenbaum said, including prenatal care, childhood immunizations, supplemental feeding programs and continuous primary health care. The steps that are needed could be funded through fund transfer mechanisms, she explained, such as taxing a portion of the health benefits for those with incomes over $75,000 to be earmarked for children.

Rosenbaum was optimistic about the possibilities for progress on children's health. "We didn't think the Act for Better Child Care would get as far as it did, and Bush is talking about quality day care. We have achieved real landmarks."

Recommendations for Federal Policy

- Expand Medicaid to cover all poor women and children under age 21
- Double funding for community health
- Conduct a national immunization campaign among all pre-schoolers
- Expand health education system through scholarships for shortage areas
- Provide the WIC (women's, infants' and children's supplemental feeding program) benefits to all who need them (it currently reaches only one-half of those eligible)

A CHARGE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

"Preventive investment must become the cornerstone of a national policy on children and youth."

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Edelman

Those who advocate for the needs of children and youth in this country have reason to be hopeful. For the first time, legislation and national commitments "are doing something more than just helping because it is right for a single black, poor child. Now, it is right to help children because it is good for the nation," Marian Wright Edelman told the concluding session of the Continuing Conference.

Business, higher education, and mainstream institutions "are now on board for children," but the focus of all the attention must be kept on children and the poor, not on the workforce, she urged. Proof that the agenda is far from complete is included in data gathered by the Children's Defense Fund:

- One in four children lives in poverty
- One in five risks becoming a teenage mother
- One in six has no health insurance coverage
- One in seven will drop out of school
- The mother of one of every two young children is in the labor force.

Edelman's concern is not only about poor children. "Mainstream" families are experiencing problems with housing and income levels, she pointed out, and there is growing apprehension about young people afflicted with "affluenza," who suffer from boredom, a lack of self-esteem and the same isolation experienced by inner-city street youngsters. This confluence of the poor and the rich provides an opportunity to combine the interests of parents and create interest in the needs of all children because, Edelman said, "the truth is, our society now needs them all."

The message about the dwindling number of young people for the future workforce hasn't gotten through to most Americans yet. "We must tell people that they cannot change the birth rates of the last few decades, but they can and had better change the health care, schools, housing, day care and employment opportunities for those already born," she admonished the Continuing Conference.

Preventive investment must become the cornerstone of a national policy on children and youth. It should encompass a continuum of effective programs, including the health care proposals presented to the Continuing Conference, quality early childhood education, and programs to prevent teenage pregnancy.

A group that "shames us all" are children who are homeless, a legacy of the Reagan years, in Edelman's view. Too much of the national debate on homeless families concerns shelters, not enough of it focuses on housing. "We have to come to grips about developing coherent policies for the homeless," Edelman said. "These thousands of children growing up with no sense of place or privacy are a timebomb for the future. How can we expect them to respect private property as adults?"

The first phase of a Children's Defense Fund campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy dealt with explaining and defining the issues. The next step is to demonstrate success. "We have to convince the schools that the

Young people need a sense that they are going someplace, Edelman told conference participants.

acquiring of basic skills largely determines who will get pregnant," Edelman said. "Young people need a sense that they are going someplace. Non-academic activities in art, music and recreation also are ways of helping young people feel they are important and contributing. If a kid has to have a baby or go on drugs to feel good, something is awry in society."

Edelman urged the Continuing Conference to become aware of the "spiritual poverty" affecting all children. All parents have trouble maintaining control over the ethical environment for their families, she said, when the media and other facets of society push "instant sex without consequences, hoarding rather than sharing. Kids need to be cared about, if they are to care."

For this reason, she added, "teaching must not be a profession of last resort. We need teachers who are dedicated, who are willing to serve people." Education doesn't happen when teachers talk — "it happens when students listen, and students listen when they feel people care."

Two themes need to dominate policymaking for children and youth, Edelman said — that all children are in trouble and need a sense of purpose; and that times have changed, requiring a redefinition of education that accepts it begins at birth, lasts for a lifetime and must include parents.

The "real harvest" for children will occur within a few years when the rhetoric, legislation and continuing efforts will begin to produce dramatic results. To get to that point, Edelman has proposed for the advocacy community:

- Defining a clear, specific policy agenda for children and families, with yearly and long-range goals. "The important thing is to be *for* something, and then to decide on one or two priorities each year," she said.
- Engaging in a more massive public education campaign. "We know what we want; we have to learn how to communicate it."
- Identifying what specifically works for children and youth
- Replicating demonstrated successes
- Providing intensive technical assistance to local capacity-building — "the key to better schools is local leadership."

With the passion that Parren Mitchell, Jr., called for at the beginning of the sixth Continuing Conference, Edelman urged everyone to continue to work together to avoid tragedies for another generation. "We have planted the seed, some of them died, but we watered those which grew, put out fertilizer, and now we have flowers growing. We need to keep growing more and more flowers so that when the harvest time comes, our children and our nation will win."

REDEFINING FEDERAL EDUCATION PRIORITIES: COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

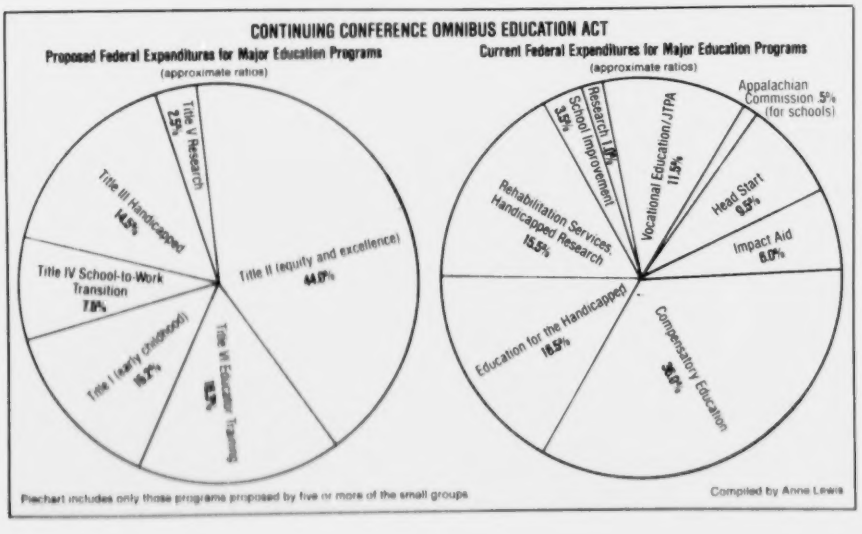
Following a full day of testimony on federal policies and programs, the Continuing Conference divided into nine groups, each led by a staff member from Congressional committees involved with education, to create a new omnibus education bill.

The bill could have no more than six titles. Its allocations could not exceed the current federal expenditures for major programs considered at the Continuing Conference (excluding health), or $11.865 billion. It had to be ready to introduce on the floor within two hours.

Each group's bill also was to be introduced by a preamble that established a rationale for federal involvement in education and addressed national needs.

While each group fashioned its own opening statement, the following was typical of the broad policy goals envisioned by the Continuing Conference:

> "The purpose of this statute is to fulfill the federal constitutional mandate to provide for the general welfare by assuring that each child at risk of educational failure is provided with educational services reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve his or her potential to become a productive member of society and to undertake the responsibilities of citizenship."


CONTINUING CONFERENCE OMNIBUS EDUCATION ACT
Proposed Federal Expenditures for Major Education Programs
(approximate ratios)
Title V Research 2.5%
Title III Handicapped 14.5%
Title IV School-to-Work Transition 7.5%
Title I (early childhood) 16.2%
Title VI Education Training 15%
Title II (equity and excellence) 44.5%
Current Federal Expenditures for Major Education Programs
(approximate ratios)
Appalachian Commission .5% (for schools)
Research 1.0%
School Improvement 3.5%
Vocational Education/JTPA 11.5%
Head Start 9.5%
Impact Aid 8.0%
Rehabilitation Services, Handicapped Research 15.5%
Education for the Handicapped 16.5%
Compensatory Education 36.0%
Piechart includes only those programs proposed by five or more of the small groups
Compiled by Anne Lewis

Groups met for two hours to devise a new omnibus education act.

An Omnibus Bill

The Continuing Conference Omnibus Education Act includes six titles. Some retain the features of major education programs that exist today, with a few modifications. Some are totally new titles, which combine a few current initiatives with programs for other Cabinet jurisdictions and with bolder approaches. The emphasis throughout is on high expectations, quality programs, collaboration of services and documented results for those children who are most disadvantaged. While this omnibus bill expresses the consensus of the various committees which developed it, it also frequently suggests ideas considered worthy of demonstration projects to determine if they should be included in future legislation.

Title I
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE PROGRAMS FOR
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN
Budget Authority: 44%

This title seeks to improve the quality of education for low-income, educationally disadvantaged students in high-poverty local districts. It retains the maintenance of effort and supplement-not-supplant provisions of current legislation, as well as the new accountability requirements reflected in the Education Amendments of 1988. It gives more emphasis to the needs of limited-English proficient students; calls for increased parental involvement with greater discretion to local school districts, under strict accountability procedures; and requires collaborative services for children and youth. It requires that programs meet high standards and allow for restructuring efforts in local schools. It would increase eligibility from the current 54% to 75% gradually.

Ideas for demonstration:

- End eligibility for wealthy districts (those with 200% of the state average per pupil expenditure).
- End eligibility for private schools.

- Concentrate resources at grades 7-9.
- Broaden evaluation criteria beyond academic performance to include attendance/dropout and other similar factors.

Title II
INVESTMENT IN RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF EDUCATORS
Budget Authority: 16.3%

The quality of teaching and administering of schools is addressed by this title through a combination of efforts. The funds primarily will be available to states as block grants, with a certain portion set aside for demonstration programs. The training and retraining of educators must focus on extending their knowledge of child development, on higher order thinking skills for all students, and on the integration of information technologies into instruction. Currently, the programs would emphasize national needs — mathematics, science and global education. This title also provides incentives to recruit minority teachers and teachers for rural areas.

Ideas for demonstration:

- Extend training and retraining to parents, who also would be involved in developing and implementing the programs focused on current national needs, such as science, mathematics and global education.
- Establish national education research centers through which teachers and administrators would receive direct training on the improvement of teaching and learning.

Title III
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
Budget Authority: 15.2%

Pre-school education should be available in either school or non-school settings to all educationally at-risk three- and four-year-olds. The model will be Head Start. Programs will emphasize coordinated services for young children, a developmental approach, parental involvement and parent education.

Ideas for demonstration:

- Extend services to infants, building upon the experience of services to handicapped infants and very young children.
- Fund kindergarten programs in local schools only if there is no mandatory program for five-year-olds.
- Provide individual coordinated service plans for each child.
- Require matching funds from business, industry, and local and state resources.
- Provide variations in models selected for implementation in order to address identified local needs.

Title IV
SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION
Budget Authority: 14.5%

This title retains the emphasis upon services to handicapped children, research on the education of the handicapped, and rehabilitative services. It calls for greater attention to the transition of handicapped youth from school to work and self-support and to education of the gifted and talented.

Congressional aide Patsy Fleming leads the discussion with Ernest Nicholson and other group members.

Ideas for demonstration:

- Restrict funding to only the most severely handicapped, transferring the funds to services for educationally disadvantaged students, on the premise that most learning disabled handicapped children are mislabeled and need different services.

Title V
SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION
Budget Authority: 7.5%

This title combines current programs under vocational education and those for youth under the Job Training Partnership Act, but with a mandate that school-to-work transition programs become more relevant and accountable. It expresses dissatisfaction with the current state of transition programs, calling for major changes in emphasis and for documentation of results. The title covers programs for summer employment, training, skill training, work preparedness, job search assistance, job counseling and youth entrepreneurship. Business and labor union involvement in the development of programs is encouraged.

Ideas for demonstration:

- Transform vocational education into a secondary-school program under Title II — Equity and Excellence for Disadvantaged Children.

Title VI
RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION
Budget Authority: 2.5%

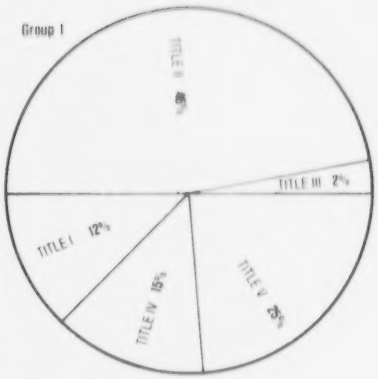
This title retains the federal government's responsibility for data gathering, research and dissemination. It places special emphasis in these areas upon the education of minorities, the education and retention of teachers, and the role of parents as educators. It requires greater attention to dissemination and to the evaluation of dissemination efforts.

Denise Alston reports her group's recommendations to the full Conference.

What Conference Participants Did Not Support

We believe it is important to point out what the Continuing Conference *did not support* for continuation of funding at the federal level. While certain features from these programs may be incorporated into the new titles, they were not deemed important enough for line-item designation in the new bill. They include impact aid; support for libraries; Chapter II (in fact, several sub-committees would end all support for the purchase of equipment, which has been a major Chapter II activity); and separate programs for math, science and drug education.

Group 1

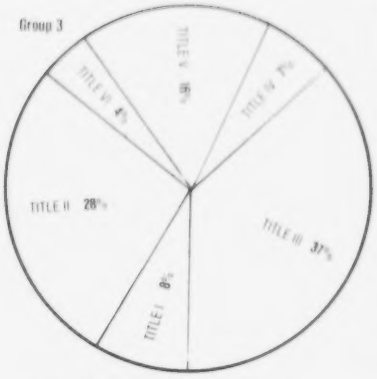


TITLE I Early Childhood
TITLE II Quality Education for Disadvantaged
TITLE III Research Statistics/Demographics
TITLE IV Education for Work
TITLE V EHA/Vocational Rehabilitation
TITLE VI

Group 2

TITLE I Improving Ed. in Lowest Achieving Schools
TITLE II Improve Teaching in Title I Schools
TITLE III Enhance Participation in High Schools
TITLE IV Other Targeted Programs
TITLE V
TITLE VI

Group 3

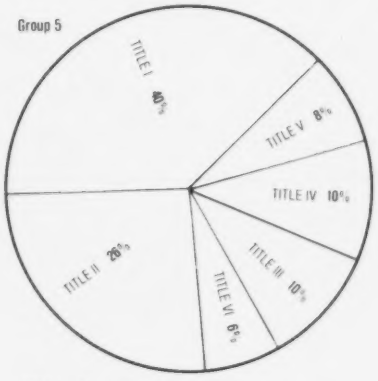


TITLE I Teacher Prep and Enhancement
TITLE II Early Intervention (0-4)
TITLE III Compensatory Education
TITLE IV Secondary School/Vocational Education
TITLE V Handicapped Education
TITLE VI Research, Demonstration and Dissemination

Group 4

TITLE I Education for Disadvantaged
TITLE II School Improvement
TITLE III Vocational Education
TITLE IV Head Start
TITLE V Handicapped Education
TITLE VI Research

Group 5



TITLE I Education for Disadvantaged
TITLE II Special Education
TITLE III Educators
TITLE IV Early Childhood
TITLE V Vocational Education
TITLE VI Research

Group 7

TITLE I Preschool Development and Education
TITLE II Ed. Improvement for Elementary and Secondary
TITLE III Severely Handicapped
TITLE IV Research, Leadership and Teacher Development
TITLE V School-to-Work
TITLE VI

Group 8

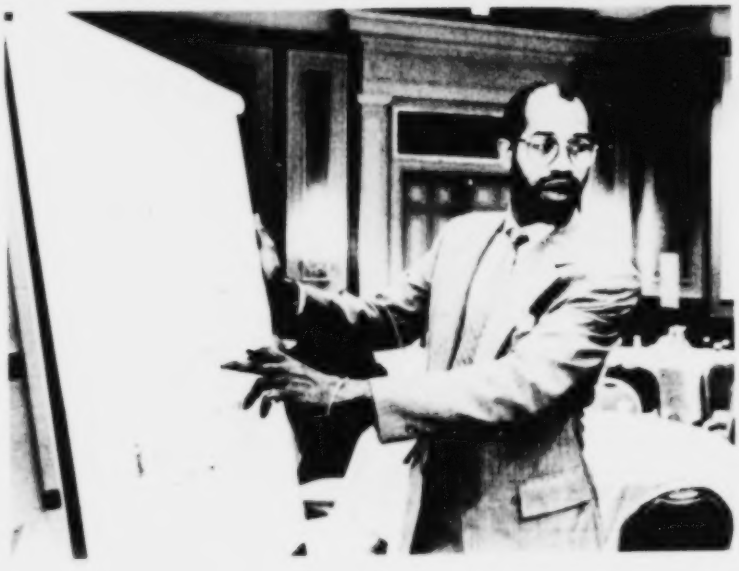
TITLE I Restructuring Schools
TITLE II Early Childhood
TITLE III Teacher Training and Retraining
TITLE IV Research and Developing
TITLE V
TITLE VI

Group 10

TITLE I Basic Skills
TITLE II Headstart
TITLE III Handicapped
TITLE IV Dropout Prevention
TITLE V Desegregation
TITLE VI

Groups 9 & 11

TITLE I Basic Skills
TITLE II School Restructuring
TITLE III Collaborative Relations
TITLE IV Handicapped and Special Services
TITLE V Special Projects
TITLE VI



TITLE
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